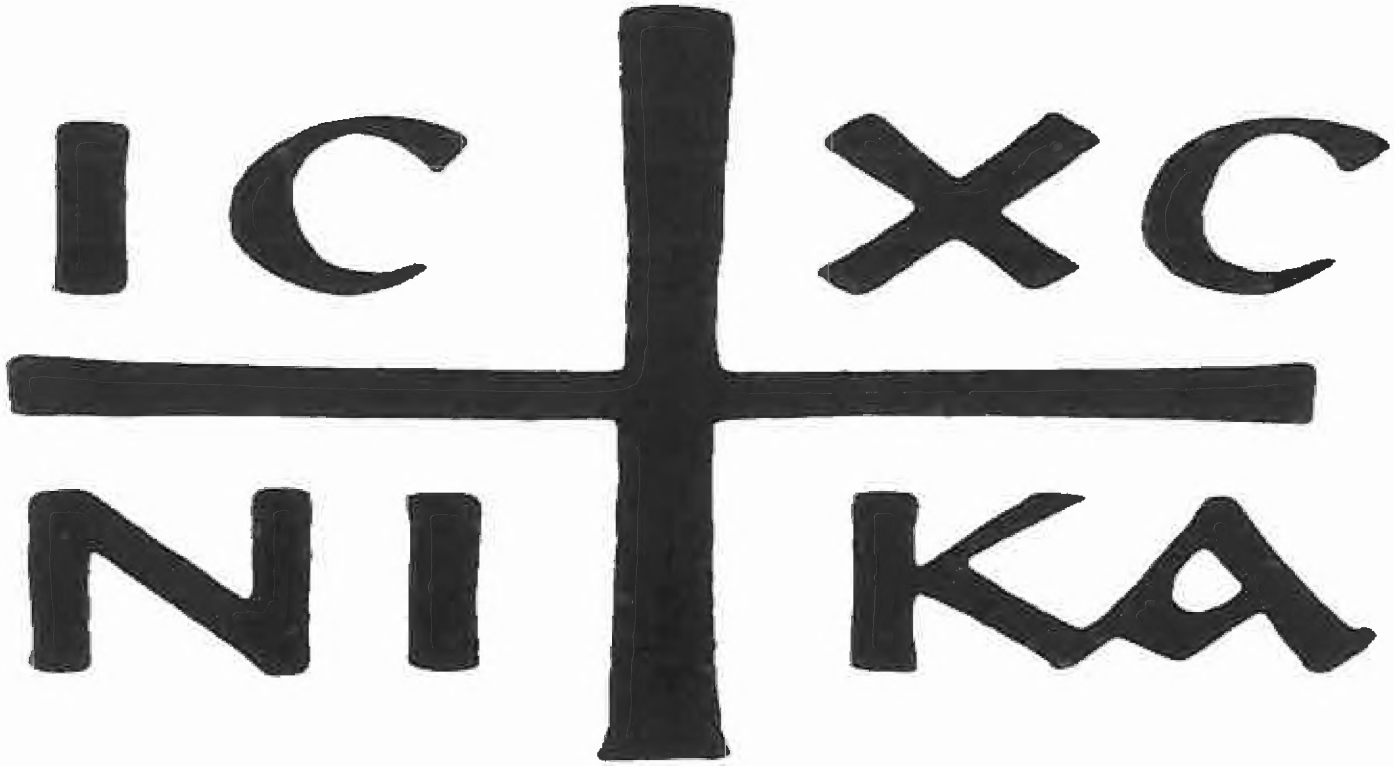
Byzantine Catholic Tradition



Introduction

- This presentation will deal with the **Byzantine Catholic Churches** also known as **Greek Catholic Churches**, the largest and perhaps the best known group of Eastern Catholic Churches in North America. Often references will be made to the Ukrainian Catholic Church, which is probably most familiar to us.

- Byzantine Churches are Catholic Churches in full communion with Rome. Byzantine Catholics Churches profess the same **Creed** (beliefs) and have the same **"Holy Mysteries"** or "Sacraments" as any other Catholic Church.

- Byzantine Churches are unique in the sense that they follow the spiritual patrimony, liturgical customs, and theological language, and nuances particular of the **Christian East**. Eastern Christianity is heavily influenced by the **Patristic writings** of the **Greek Fathers.**

Why are Byzantine Churches called Byzantine?

- The Byzantine Catholic Churches are called this way because they follow the spiritual traditions of **Byzantium** (Constantinople), founded by **St. Andrew the Apostle.** The term Byzantine is derived from Byzantium, the city that, in the year 325 A.D., became the political, cultural, and commercial center for the eastern, Greek speaking part of the **Roman empire**.

- The city was later renamed **Constantinople** after Constantine's death and is now modern Istanbul, Turkey.

- The region known as Byzantium was evangelized by St. Andrew the Apostle known as the **"First called"**; St. Andrew was the brother of **St. Peter** and like Peter was crucified a **martyr**. According to tradition St. Andrew founded the See of Byzantium in the year 38 A.D.

- After **the Great Schism** of 1054 that split Christendom into East and West, the patriarchate of Constantinople became the Spiritual See of Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

- Byzantine Catholics are for the most part Eastern Christians that broke away from the See of Constantinople and returned to full communion with the **See of Rome** and its bishop, the Pope, after the great Schism of 1054. The return to Rome took place gradually in subsequent reunions.

- Two of the most notable reunions are the **Union of Brest** in 1595 and the **Union of Uzhhorod** in 1646.

What group of Churches make up the Byzantine Churches?

- The Byzantine Churches or Greek Catholic Churches are **"Sui Juris"** Churches (self-governing Churches), they are constituted by the following Churches:

A. The Melkite Catholic Church
B. The Ukrainian Catholic Church
C. The Ruthenian Catholic Church
D. The Romanian Catholic Church
E. The Greek Catholic Church
F. The Greek Catholic Church, Eparchy of Krizevci (former Yugoslavia)
G. The Bulgarian Catholic Church
H. The Slovak Catholic Church
I. The Hungarian Catholic Church
J. The Russian Byzantine Catholic Church
K. The Belarusian Greek Catholic Church
L . The Albanian Greek Catholic Church
M. The Macedonian Greek Catholic Church

Source (CNEWA - Catholic Near East Welfare Association)

Who is a Byzantine Catholic?

A. A **Byzantine Catholic** or **Greek Catholic** is an Eastern Catholic and a member of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church by reason of his or her **Baptism**, and **Chrismation** (Confirmation), and his or her participation in the **Holy Mysteries** (Sacraments) and the **Divine Liturgy** (Eucharist), the central aspect of worship .

The **Catholic Church** headed by the bishop of Rome or **Pope** is a communion of 23 **Sister Churches** all equal in dignity. One Western (Roman Catholic or Latin Church) and 22 Eastern Churches.

B. Byzantine Catholics **are not** Roman Catholics; however, like Roman Catholics, are under the Spiritual and temporal Jurisdiction of the **Bishop of Rome** or Pope.

C. Byzantine Catholics together with Roman Catholics profess the same **Creed** (faith) and practice the same seven Holy Mysteries or Sacraments, each according to their own liturgical traditions, spirituality, and apostolic heritage. Hence, that Eastern Catholics and Roman Catholics, use different words, expressions, or formulas to speak about the same realities, beliefs, devotions, or practices of faith.

D. Byzantine Catholics are headed either by a **Patriarch** or by a **Metropolitan Bishop** in charge of the local bishops. Eastern and Roman Catholics can fulfill their **Sunday obligation** in each other's Church.

Praying before the Holy Icons

What are some common terms used to describe the jurisdiction of Byzantine Churches?

- **Archeparchy**: the Byzantine equivalent of an Archdiocese. It is led by a Metropolitan Archbishop also known as **Archeparch**.

- **Eparchy**: the Byzantine equivalent of a diocese. It is led by a bishop also known as an **eparch** who oversees all the parishes and ministries in his eparchy.

- **Parishes**: local churches led by a parish priest; sometimes with the assistance of a deacon or subdeacon.

How do Byzantine Catholics celebrate the Paschal Mystery?

- Byzantine Catholics celebrate the **Paschal Mystery** (the life, death and resurrection of our Lord) through five important cycles:

A. The great cycle of a Christian's life.
B. The Daily cycle.
C. The Weekly cycle.
D. The Annual cycle of movable feasts.
E. The Annual cycle of fixed feasts.

The Five Cycles
"The Cycle of a Christian's Life"

- **The Great cycle of a Christian's life**: from birth to death, the life of a Christian is infused with the **grace** of God through the **Holy Mysteries** (Sacraments) and prayer.

- In this cycle of life men and women journey towards union with God and His promise of eternal life. This journey towards God's Kingdom begins at Baptism and Chrismation and ends with death.

- In the course of this journey men and women are strengthened by the **Eucharistic meal**, received in Holy Communion at each **Divine Liturgy (Mass)**, the central aspect of Byzantine Catholic worship.

The Five Cycles
"The Daily Cycle"

- **The Daily cycle**: also known as the **"divine praises",** are the prayers offered by the Church all day long. These prayers are offered in **monasteries** and in **parishes** where the clergy and Christian faithful gather to pray. In the Byzantine liturgical tradition **the Church's day** begins at evening, following the Jewish customs of counting the days. The daily cycle or divine praises is compose of the following:

A. **Vespers:** is the solemn **evening prayer** of the Church which begins the liturgical day. We thank God for the blessing of creation, especially for the gift of light both corporal and spiritual, and ask for pardon for our sins and offenses, and protection throughout the night.

B. **Compline:** is a communal prayer before bedtime.

C. **The Midnight Office:** is a **nocturnal vigil**, in which we meditate upon the unexpected coming of Christ.

D. **Matins** (Orthros): is the **solemn morning prayer** of the Church, an office of supplication, repentance and praise.

E. **The First Hour**, celebrated after Matins, is the first of the **four daytime Hours**; it is followed by:

The Third Hour, celebrated at mid-morning.

The Sixth Hour, celebrated at noon.

The Ninth Hour, celebrated between mid-afternoon and Vespers of the new day.

Typika: is a service of psalms and prayers appointed for the Liturgy of the day, which is held when the Divine Liturgy is not celebrated.

(Source: Metropolitan Cantor Institute)

The Five Cycles
"The Weekly Cycle"

- Each day of the **Weekly Cycle** is devoted to specific individual **memorials**. Sunday is dedicated to Christ's Resurrection. Monday - the Holy Bodiless Powers (Angels, Archangels, etc.). Tuesday - the prophets especially St. John the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord; Wednesday - the Cross and recalls Judas' betrayal.

- Thursday - the **Holy Apostles** and **Hierarchs**, especially St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra in Lycia. Friday is also consecrated to the Cross and recalls the day of the Crucifixion and Saturday is dedicated to All Saints, especially the **Mother of God** (Theotokos), and to the memory of all those who have departed this life in the hope of resurrection and eternal life.

- Each week, of the Weekly Cycle, is centered around the **Eight Tones** (the basis for Byzantine Church music), and each week has its appointed **Tone**. On Saturday Evening of **Bright Week** (the Eve of St. Thomas Sunday), **the cycle of Tones** begins with Tone One, and week by week, the sequence continues through the successive Tones, One to Eight, changing to a new Tone every Saturday Evening, throughout the year.

(Source: St. Melany Byzantine Catholic Church)

The Five Cycles
"The Annual Cycle of Movable Feasts"

- The **annual cycle** or **liturgical year** brings to our attention the principal events in the life of Our Lord Jesus, and his Mother, the **Holy Theotokos**, the accomplishments of the Saints, and the theological doctrines of the Faith through special **feasts**, **fasts** and **commemorations**.

- The annual cycle is divided into **movable** and **fixed feasts**. The movable feasts are also known as the **Paschal cycle** because the date of their celebration is dependant on the central feast of the liturgical cycle which is **Pascha** (Easter). The liturgical year or annual cycle begins in the Byzantine Catholic tradition on **September 1/September 14**.

- The feasts associated with the annual cycle of **movable feasts** are: **Palm/Willow Sunday**, Holy **Ascension** (the fortieth day after Pascha) and **Holy Pentecost** (the Descent of the Holy Spirit the **fiftieth day** after Pascha).

The Five Cycles
The Annual cycle of Fixed Feast

- The **fixed annual cycle** is composed of memorials celebrated each year on the same date.
- Each day of the year is dedicated to the memory of particular Christian events or Saints, their particular feast or memorial is celebrated always on the same calendar date each year.
- Thus, in honor of each event or Saint(s), special **hymns** have been composed which are added to the usual hymns and prayers of the day.
- May 13/27, for instance, is the feast **of St. Cyril and Methodious**, Apostles to the Slavs.

(Source: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press)

The Great Feasts of the Church

- **Pascha** (Easter) is the **"Feast of feasts"** having a central and unique place in the Byzantine liturgical year. Next in importance come the **"Twelve Great Feasts"** of the Church. These feasts can be divided into two groups. **Feasts of the Lord** and **Feasts of the Mother of God** (Theotokos).

- These feasts are: (according to the Gregorian calendar)

Great Feasts of the Lord

1. The Universal Exaltation (or Elevation) of the Life-creating Cross
2. The Nativity of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ
3. The Theophany (or Epiphany) of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ
4. The Entrance of Our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday before Pascha)
5. The Ascension of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
6. The Descent of the Holy Spirit
7. The Transfiguration of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ

Great Feasts of the Mother of God:

8. The Nativity of the Most-Holy Theotokos
9. The Entrance (or Presentation) of the Theotokos into the Temple
10. The Meeting of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple
11. The Annunciation to the Most-Holy Theotokos
12. The Falling-Asleep (or Dormition) of the Most-Holy Theotokos

- All of the Feasts listed above, with the exception of Palm Sunday and Holy Pentecost are preceded by a period of preparation known as the **Forefeast** or pre-feast. In addition, The **Nativity of Christ** and the **Dormition** are preceded by a special fasting period.

(Source: Tikhon's Seminary Press)

The Penitential Seasons of the Byzantine Liturgical year

- **Fasting** is an important **discipline** in the Christian East. Major portions of the Liturgical cycle are taken up by periods of fasting. In the Byzantine tradition observed by Greek Catholics or Byzantine Catholics (and Orthodox Christians) there are four major penitential seasons, these are:

- A. **Great Lent** also known as **the Great Fast** (40 days)
- B. **The Apostles Fast** also known as the **Peter and Paul Fast.** (Length varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction)
- C. **The Nativity Fast** (pre-Christmas)also known as **The Philip Fast (Pylypywka)** (40 days).
- D. **The Dormition Fast** (Two weeks)

- In addition to these periods of fasting Greek Catholics or Byzantine Catholics are to observe simple fasting on all Fridays throughout the year and strict fasting on the first day of the Great Fast and on Great Friday (Good Friday). The particular law of each jurisdiction is to be observed by the faithful regarding Fasting.

Did you Know?

- The Byzantine Liturgical year is very different from the **Latin Church's** Liturgical year used by Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholic Liturgical year begins on the First Sunday of Advent, the Byzantine Liturgical year, on the other hand, begins on **September 1/14**.

- The Byzantine Liturgical year does not use the Roman Catholic structure and terminology for certain seasons; Greek Catholics do not have Advent or Ordinary time. In the Byzantine tradition the season prior to Christmas, known in the Latin Church as Advent, is call the **Nativity Fast (Pylypywka)**. There is no ordinary time in the Byzantine tradition, all Sundays are numbered after **Pentecost**.

- Greek Catholics or Byzantine Catholics like Roman Catholics, consider Pascha (Easter), the most important season of the Church Year. Like Roman Catholics, Byzantines have a Lenten season known as the **Great Fast** or Great Lent. Byzantine Catholics, like Roman Catholics, also celebrate the season of Christmas, known as the **Nativity**.

Great Lent or The Great Fast

- In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition or Greek Catholic tradition, Great Lent or the Great Fast begins seven weeks prior to Pascha (Easter) on **Clean Monday** also known as **Pure or Bright Monday**. Byzantines Catholics or Greek Catholics unlike Roman Catholics do not observe Ash Wednesday. The Great Fast or Great Lent lasts 40 days, unlike the Roman Catholic season of Lent, the Byzantine Great fast includes Sundays.

- The Great Fast comes to an end on Friday of the sixth week, before **Lazarus Saturday**, which is the Saturday before **Palm/Willow Sunday**. On Palm Sunday the Great entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem is celebrated, this is one of the major feasts of the Byzantine liturgical year.

- Each day during Holy Week has a theme. The theme for Monday is Joseph's virtue, and the **withering of the fig tree**; Tuesday is the **Ten Virgins**; Wednesday is the anointing of Jesus at Bethany, Thursday is the **Mystical Supper**, Great Friday is the **Passion**, and Holy Saturday also known as the **Great Sabbath** is the burial of our Lord. On Holy Wednesday the sacrament of anointing (Holy Unction) takes place, healing is intimately connected with repentance in Byzantine spirituality.

Did you Know?

- The **Triodion** is a three week period prior to the beginning of Great Lent named after the liturgical book used for this pre-Lenten period, Great Lent and Holy Week.
- The **Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee** is the first Sunday of this three week period. It marks the beginning of a time of preparation for the spiritual journey of Lent. In the Byzantine Tradition this period is marked by worship, prayer, fasting, and acts of charity.

The Sundays of the Triodion are:

1. **Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee** (Luke 18:9-14)
2. **Sunday of the Prodigal Son** (Luke 15:11-32)
3. **Sunday of the Last Judgment** (aka Meatfare Sunday; Matt. 25:31-46)
4. **Sunday of Forgiveness** (aka Cheesefare Sunday; Matt. 6:14-21)

Holy Thursday

- On this Holy day, the Byzantine Catholic Tradition commemorates four important events in the life of Jesus and his disciples leading up to his passion. These events are:

  A. The washing of the Feet
  B. The institution of the Eucharist
  C. The agony at Gethsemane
  D. The betrayal by Judas

- On Holy Thursday, the Liturgy of **St. Basil the Great** is celebrated. The Holy Chrism also known as **Holy Myron** is consecrated for the use in the administration of the Holy Mysteries, especially: Baptism, Chrismation, Holy Orders and **Holy Unction**. In some Byzantine traditions a foot-washing rite follows the Divine Liturgy.

Great and Holy Friday

- Byzantine tradition calls Good Friday, Holy and **Great Friday**, or just simply Great Friday. There is no Divine Liturgy (Eucharist) celebrated on this day.

- In the afternoon, around three o'clock, the great Vespers are celebrated, the accounts from the Gospels regarding the crucifixion and death of Jesus is read, special attention is given to role of **Joseph of Arimatea** in securing the body of Jesus for burial. During the readings of the passion at the moment when Jesus body is taken from the cross, the priest removes the icon of Jesus' body from the cross, and carries the icon of Jesus body to the **sanctuary** wrapped in a white cloth and places it on the **holy table**.

- After the reading of the Passion the priest accompanied by the **deacon** and **acolytes** brings out the **epitaphios (icon of Jesus** after being taken down from the cross, depicting the body of Christ ready for burial) carries it around the church and places the epitaphios in the **sepulche**r (tomb) - (plashchanytsya).

- On Friday evening the Orthros (Matins) of Holy Saturday are celebrated. This service consist of **the Lamentations** (hymns of praise intercalated with psalm118 used during funerals) sung by the congregation. During this service the Epitaphios icon is carried in procession around the church. In some parishes the entire flower-bedecked Sepulcher, symbolizing the Tomb, is carried in the procession.

(Source: Greek Archdiocese of America)

Holy Saturday or Great Sabbath

- In the Byzantine tradition Holy Saturday begins with the Orthros (Matins) on the evening of Great Friday. This is the day between the crucifixion and the resurrection. On this day Byzantine spirituality reflects on Jesus descent into **Hades**, the dwelling of the dead.

- The **Liturgy of St. Basil,** celebrated on this day, reminds us that Jesus descended into Hades to loosen the bond of death. Death has no power, it has been defeated from within, by the power of Christ. This is the longest liturgy of the liturgical year.

- In the Byzantine Catholic tradition Holy Saturday is a day of **vigilant anticipation**. On this day the liturgy focuses on Jesus' rest on the tomb.

The Byzantine Celebration of Pascha

A. **Pascha (Easter)** is the most important feast in the Byzantine liturgical year. It celebrates the resurrection of our Lord and his victory over the power of death.

B. The celebration of Pascha often begins just prior to midnight with the celebration of the **midnight office.** This service is sometimes called **"Before the Tomb"** in the **Slavic tradition**.

C. During the service, the **epitaphios** is transferred from the tomb in the middle of the Church to the **Holy Table**, where it will remain until the **leavetaking** of Pascha.

The Byzantine Celebration of Pascha (continued)

D. After the transfer of the epitaphios to the holy table, all the lights of the church are extinguished and the matins of the resurrection begins in darkness. The priest lights his candle from the **vigil light** and exits through the **Royal doors** and passes on the light to the faithful, who are holding candles.

E. The priest sings, "Come, receive light from the unfading light, and glorify Christ, who arose from the dead." Then, the priest reads the resurrection story from the Gospel of Mark (16:1-8).

F. After the Gospel reading, the celebrant leads the people in singing the Resurrection hymn. At the end, **the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom** is celebrated as usual.

Did you know?

- In the Byzantine tradition the first week following the celebration of Pascha is called **Bright Week**. Bright Week begins on the Sunday of Pascha and ends on the second Sunday of Pascha called **Thomas Sunday**. This entire week is considered a continuous day of celebration and joy for the **Resurrection of Our Lord**.

- Thomas Sunday commemorates the appearances of Christ following the resurrection, especially the appearance to Thomas, the doubting disciple.

(Source: Greek Archdiocese of America)

What is the Divine Liturgy?

- In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition, **Divine Liturgy** is the name used to refer to the celebration of the **Eucharist**. The Byzantine Tradition has several liturgies for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The most common are:

A. **The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom** (5th Century A.D.), used on most days of the year.

B. **The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great** (4th Century A.D.), used on the 5 Sundays of Great Lent, and on Saint Basil's feast day. On the eves of the Nativity and Theophany, and on Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday. All together, St. Basil's liturgy is celebrated 10 or 11 days out of the liturgical year.

C. **The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts** (6th Century A.D.), celebrated on Wednesdays and Fridays during Great Lent and on the first three days of Holy Week. It is essentially the office of vespers with a communion service added, the Holy Gifts having been consecrated and reserved the previous Sunday.

Parts of the Byzantine Liturgy

- The Divine Liturgy is composed of three main parts:

  A.The **Proskomedia**, the service of preparing the holy gifts.

  B. The **Liturgy of the Catechumens** or Liturgy of the Word.

  C.The **Liturgy of the Faithful** or Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The "Prothesis" (preparation of the gifts)

The Holy Mysteries

- In Byzantine Catholic terminology, the word **"Holy Mysteries"** is used to refer to the seven sacraments that communicates the very life of God (Grace) to those who receive them. These Holy Mysteries are:

A. **Baptism**: The sacrament of baptism is administered in the Byzantine Catholic tradition by a **threefold immersion** in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

B. **Chrismation**: In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition Chrismation (Confirmation) is not delayed to the **age of reason**. It follows immediately after Baptism, the infant is Chrismated with **Holy Chrism** also known as **Holy Myron**. The Holy Chrism is blessed during the Liturgy of Holy Thursday. In the Byzantine tradition, unlike the Latin tradition, the priest can confer Chrismation (Confirmation).

Baptism by Immersion

The Holy Mysteries

C. **Eucharist**: In the Byzantine Catholic tradition **Holy Communion**, the reception of the body and blood of Christ, is not delayed to the age of reason. Infants received Holy Communion after Baptism. The precious blood is given to the infant through a **liturgical spoon**.

D. **Confession**: In the Byzantine Catholic tradition confession does not always take place in the confessional, but may happen in front of the **Icon of Christ.**

E. **Holy Unction**: According to Byzantine practice, this service is to be celebrated in the presence of seven priests. However, pastoral circumstances sometimes do not allow for the full expression of this rite. Anyone that is ill can receive this sacrament.

Byzantine Confession

The Holy Mysteries (continued)

F. **Marriage:** In the Byzantine tradition the sacrament of marriage is referred to as the **Crowning.** Marriage is considered in Byzantine spirituality an icon of the relationship between Jesus and His Church.

The first part of the wedding is **the service of solemn betrothal,** followed by prayers, and the granting and blessing of the rings. Then the ceremony continues with the crowning the main ritual of the wedding, and the Lturgy of the Word. After the readings the couple share **the common cup** containing **blessed wine**.

After the couples share the cup, a litany is recited followed by a procession around the **marriage table**. After the procession the crowns are removed and a final blessing is given.

G. **Ordination:** Ordination or **Holy Orders.** In the Byzantine tradition there are **minor orders** and **major orders**. The minor orders are: subdeacon, reader, acolyte or candle bearer and cantor. The major orders are diaconate, priest and bishop.

The Crowning

Did you Know?

- In the Byzantine Catholic tradition priests can be from the celibate or from the married states. In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition, **bishops** are selected from the monastic ranks.

- Until recently, in North America, Byzantine married men were not allowed to be ordained priests, like they do in **Eastern Europe**. A priest that has been ordained cannot marry. However, a married man who wants to become a Byzantine priest in North America now can do so.

Chrismation of Infant after Baptism

Liturgical Vestments

Epitrachelion (Priest's stole)

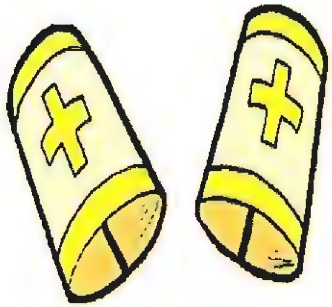
Sticharion (Alb)

Phelon (Chasuble)

Epitrachel

Stichar

Orar (deacon's stole)



Epimanikia
(Cuffs)

Omophor

Sticharion

Omophorion
Bishop's Vestment

Liturgical Colors

In the Byzantine Catholic tradition the following **liturgical colors** are used:

A. **White:** is the symbol of God's uncreated light. White vestments are worn on the great feasts of Easter, Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension and Transfiguration.

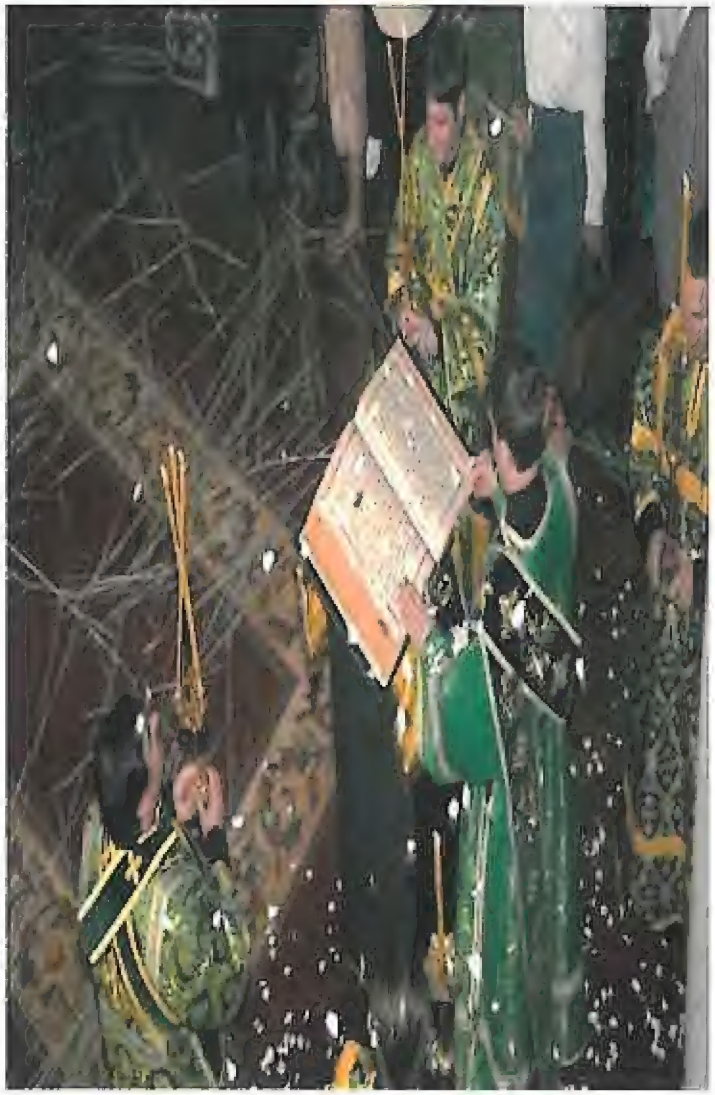
B. **Red:** is used on the Sundays of Great Lent, during Christmas Fast, on the feast day of the Elevation of the Lord's Cross, and sometimes on the feast days of great martyrs.

C. **Gold:** is the color of glory, greatness and virtue. It is assigned to Sundays, as the days of the Lord — the King of Glory; in addition, the Church in golden vestments notes the days of His special anointed ones — the prophets, apostles and hierarchal saints.

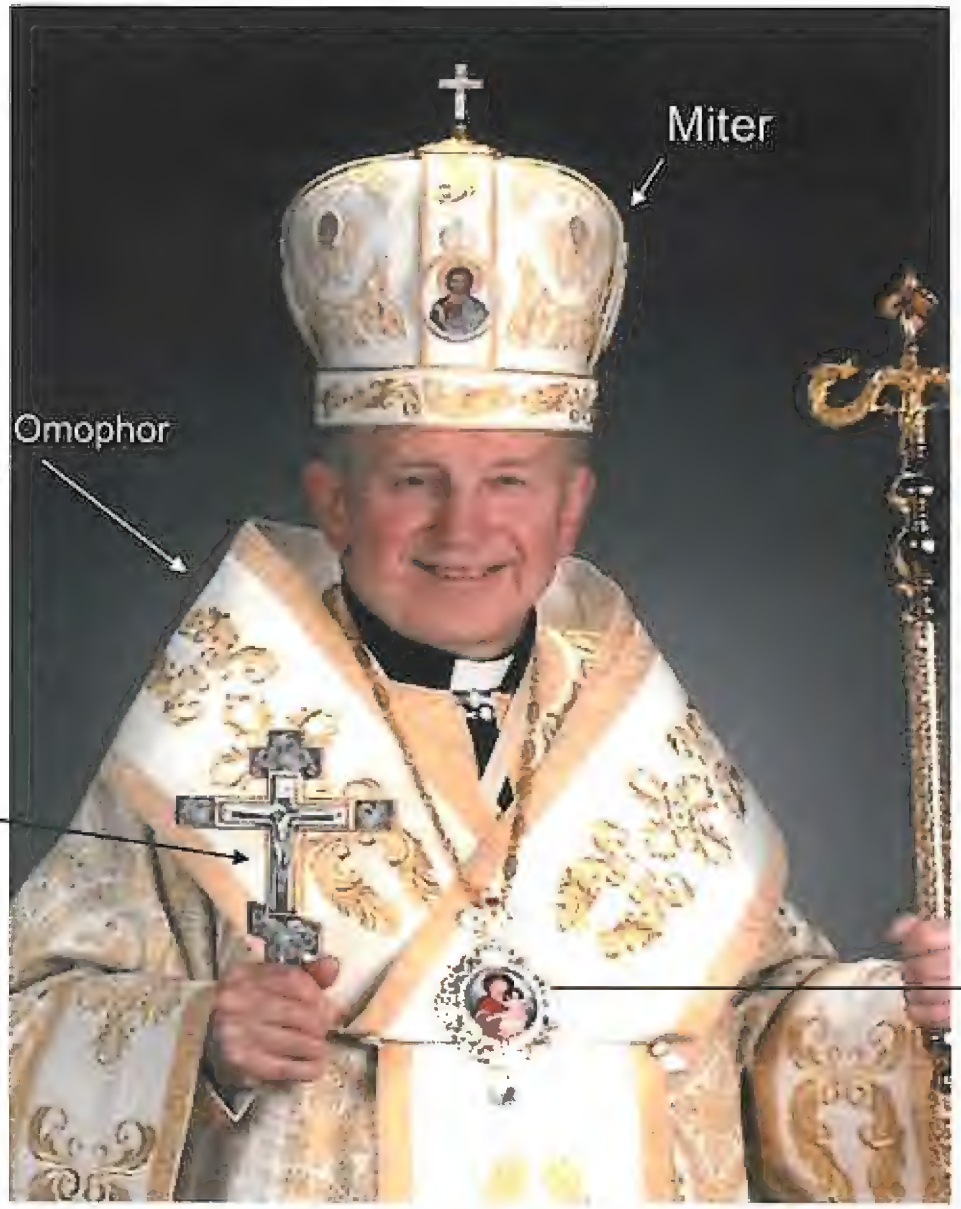
D. **Green**: is the color of plants and a symbol of new life — it is used on Palm Sunday and throughout the feast of the Holy Trinity (until its end).

E.**Light blue** or blue — is the color of the feast days of the Most Holy Mother of God. It is the color of the sky, and it conforms to the teaching about the Mother of God, who held the Resident of the Heavens in Her Most Pure Body.

F. **Black**: is nearest in spirit to the weekdays of Great Lent. It is the symbol of renunciation from worldly strife, It is the color of repentance and strictness to oneself.



Bishop's Insignias

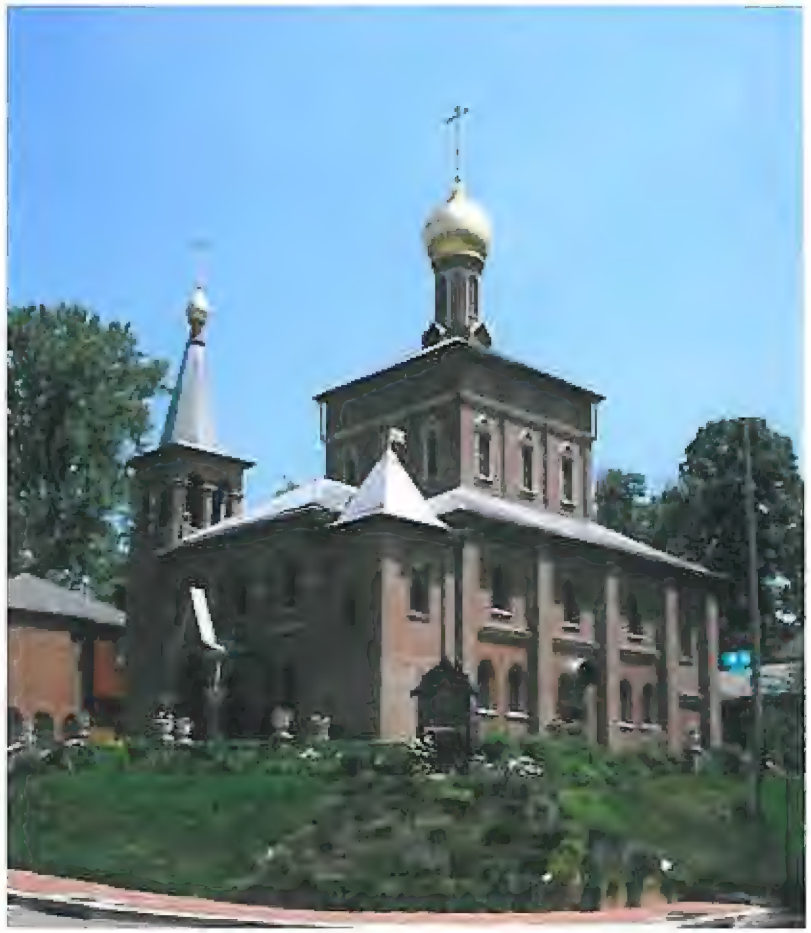


Byzantine Architecture

A. The Church building is divided into three main parts: the **narthex** (vestibule), the **nave** (the temple proper) and the **sanctuary** (also called the altar or holy place). The altar (sanctuary) is situated in the eastern part of the church, behind the **iconostasis**, regardless of its shape.

B. A bell tower is attached to (or built separately by the western part of the church. The church building has many symbolic meanings; perhaps the oldest and most prominent is the concept that the Church is **the Ark of Salvation** (as in Noah's Ark) in which the world is saved from the flood of temptations.

C. The **cupola** instead of a flat ceiling symbolizes the sky. In Slavic churches, cupolas are often topped by domes, where crosses are mounted.



The Byzantine Sanctuary

- The Sanctuary is the Holiest place in a Byzantine Catholic Church. It is located behind the altar screen called **iconostasis**. It contains the following:

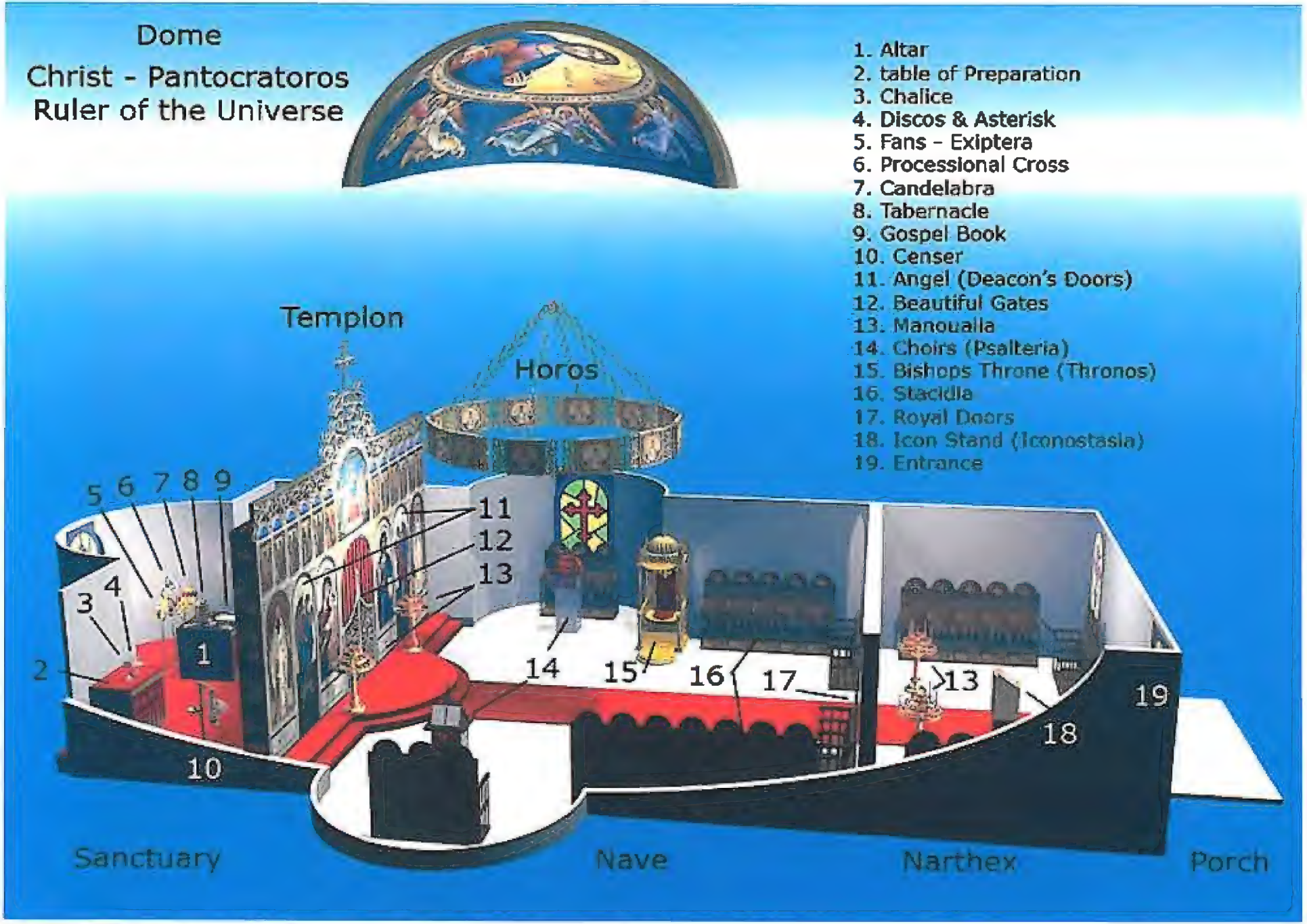
A. **Altar table**: It is located in the center, just behind the **Holy doors**. On top of the altar is the **tabernacle**, the **book of the Gospel** and the **antimension** are placed. Behind the altar a **candelabra** containing seven candles is found. (See graphic # 1 –next slide)

B. **Tabernacle** : is the sacred vessel used to reserve the Eucharist used to bring communion for the sick; it is usually shaped in the form of a Church. The presence of the Christ in the tabernacle is signaled by a vigil lamp. (See graphic # 8 –next slide)

C. **Table of Preparation** : This table is also known as the **table of oblation**; it is found in the sanctuary left to the altar. This is the table used for the service of preparing the **prosphora** (bread) and wine. On top of the **Table** rest the **chalice** (cup) the **diskos** (paten = round plate), **the spear** (liturgical knife), a **liturgical spoon** (for the distribution of holy communion), the **asterisk** or star (a metal stand that holds the cover for the Eucharistic bread or prosphora). (See graphic #2- next slide)

D. **Antimension**: a rectangular piece of silk or linen decorated with the image of **Christ's entombment** and the image of the **four Evangelists**. A small **relic** of a martyr is sewn into it. During the Divine Liturgy (Eucharist), the antimension is placed on the center of the altar. The antimension serves as an altar in case of pastoral necessity and the Eucharist **cannot** be celebrated without it.

Inside a Byzantine Catholic Church



The Iconostasis

A. In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition, the **Iconostasis** (Greek for icon stand) a screen (wall), consisting of one or more rows of icons, separating the nave from the sanctuary.

B. In Byzantine spirituality the iconostasis is a boundary between two worlds, the divine and the human. In some small Byzantine churches the iconostasis may be completely absent and may be replaced by small icons.

The Iconostasis has three sets of doors.

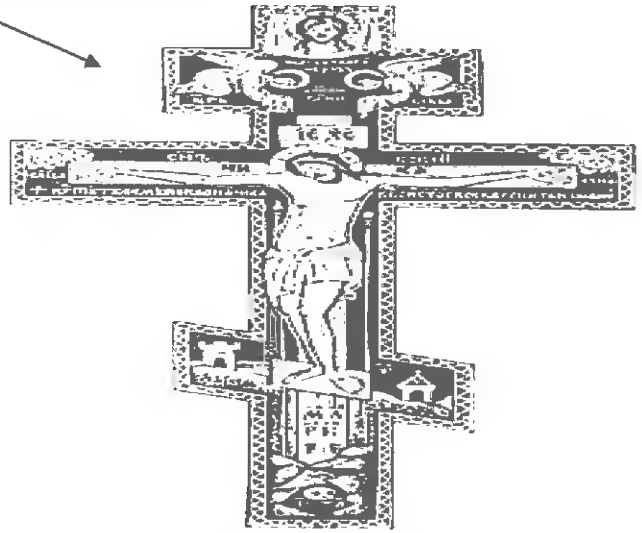
C. The central doors are call **Holy Doors** or **beautiful gate** and contain an icon of the annunciation. The doors to the left and to the right of the Holy doors are called the north and south doors, also known as the deacon or angel doors.

D. The Icons of the Savior, the Theotokos, the Archangels and the Saints, featured on the iconostasis, represent the reconciliation taking place between the human and the divine.

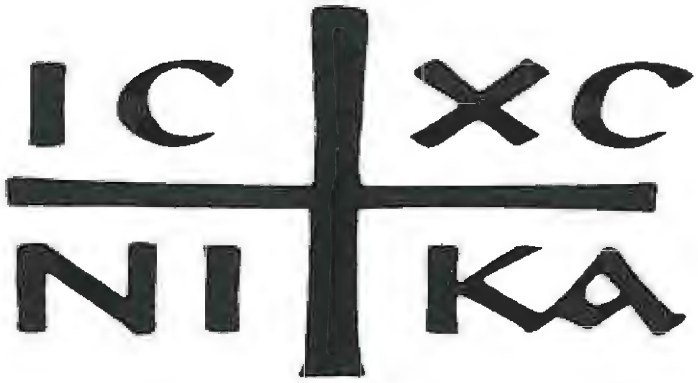
Iconostasis or Templon

Byzantine Symbols

Byzantine Cross



Icons – "Christ Pantocrator"



Christogram – "Jesus Christ Conquers"

Holy Candles

Holy Icons

- In the Byzantine tradition **Icons** (holy images) are considered windows to heaven. Icons are never painted they are written by **iconographers.** Icons have been used in the devotion of the **Christian East** from the very beginning.

- **St. John Damascene** wrote, "anyone who seeks to destroy the Icons of Christ or His Mother, the Blessed Theotokos, or any of the Saints, is the enemy of Christ, the Holy Mother of God, and the Saints, and is the defender of the Devil and his demons.

- An icon could be an image of Christ, the Holy Theotokos, the Saints, Angels, or important aspects in the life of Jesus or the Church. **Byzantine Catholics** pray in the presence of Icon (not to the icon itself). Byzantine Catholics venerate the Holy Icons to show respect for the sacred. In the Byzantine tradition Icons are venerated in the following way:

    1. Approach the icon and make two **metania** (bows)
    2. Kiss the icon on feet or hands (never the face)
    3. A candle may placed before the icon at this time
    4. Make an additional metania and then depart

- During Lent, a complete **prostration** to the ground is made instead of the metania bow. Before entering the pew, the custom is normally to bow to the altar and make the Sign of the Cross .

Byzantine Liturgical Postures and Gestures

- In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition there are several liturgical postures and gestures, the most common are:

A. **Standing**: It is the **official posture** of the Church. In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition, standing is a symbol of the **resurrection.** Byzantine Catholics stand for most of the service.

B. **Prostration:** There are two basic kinds of prostrations, known as Great Metania, and Small Metania. Both are preceded by the **sign of the Cross**.

Great Metania: the worshipper prostrates the whole body, throwing the weight forwards onto the hands and touching the ground with the forehead.

Small Metania: The worshipper bows from the waist, touching the ground with the fingers of the right hand.

C. **Bows** (reverence): At certain times the worshipper merely bows the head; sometimes this is accompanied by the Sign of the Cross.

The Byzantine Sign of the Cross

A. In the Byzantine Catholic Tradition, **the Sign of the Cross** is made with the thumb and the first two fingers of the right hand joined at the lips (the third and fourth fingers being closed on the palm).

B. By joining the thumb and the first two fingers, we express our belief in the **Most-Holy Trinity.**

C. The two fingers closed on the palm represent **the two natures of Christ** divine and human.

D. With the thumb and first two fingers joined, we touch first the brow, then the breast, the right shoulder and then the left, making on ourselves the Sign of the Cross and signifying by the four points that the **Holy Trinity** has sanctified our thoughts (mind), feelings (heart), desires (soul) and acts (strength) to service of God.

E. By making the Sign of the Cross on ourselves we also signify that Christ has saved us by His sufferings on the Cross.

F. The Byzantine way of making the sign of the cross pre-dates the Latin style used by Roman Catholics.

The Prayer Rope

- **A prayer rope** is a devotional instrument of prayer, in the form of a loop made up of complex knots, usually out of wool or silk, that is used by Byzantine Catholics to count the number of times they have prayed the **Jesus' Prayer**: "Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." This prayer is the most mystical prayer in Eastern Christianity according to some of the Fathers of the Church.

- To learn more about the prayer rope click go to the following link:

- http://www.slideshare.net/pcuadra/the-prayer-rope

St. Cyril and Methodius

- Saints **Cyril and Methodius** were Byzantine Greek brothers born in Thessaloniki in the 9th century, who became missionaries of Christianity among the **Slavic peoples** of Great Moravia and Pannonia.

- Through their work they influenced the cultural development of all Slavs, for which they received the title **"Apostles to the Slavs".** They are credited with devising the **Cyrillic alphabet**, the first alphabet used to transcribe the Old Church Slavonic language. (example: жядрфбчю)

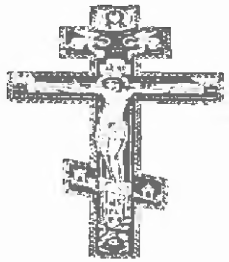
- After their deaths, their pupils continued their missionary work among other Slavs. Both brothers are venerated in the Byzantine Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches as saints with the title of **"Equals to the Apostles".**

- In 1880, **Pope Leo XIII** introduced their feast into the calendar of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1980, Pope John Paul II declared them **co-patrons of Europe**, together with **Saint Benedict of Nursia**. The feast of St. Cyril and Methodius is celebrated on May 11th.

Icon of St. Cyril and Methodius

Vatican II

Decree Orientalium Ecclesiarum



"All members of the Eastern Rite should know and be convinced that they can and should always preserve their legitimate liturgical rite and their established way of life, and that these may not be altered except to obtain for themselves an organic improvement. All these, then, must be observed by the members of the Eastern rites themselves. Besides, they should attain to on ever greater knowledge and a more exact use of them, and, if in their regard they have fallen short owing to contingencies of times and persons, they should take steps to return to their ancestral traditions."

The Nicene Creed- Our Faith

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being with the Father. Through Him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day He rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures: He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father. With the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified.

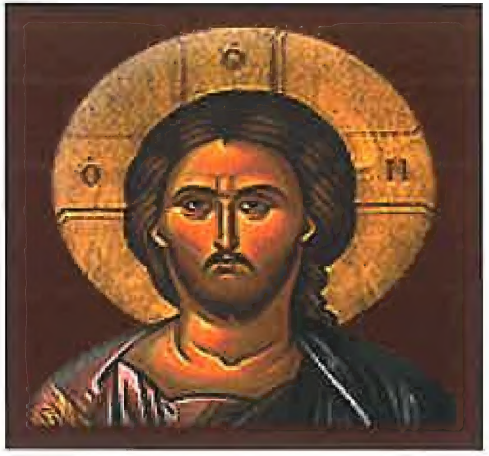
He has spoken through the Prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

The End

ICXC NIKA



GO WITH GOD!

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